



International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)

ISSN 2307-4531
(Print & Online)

<http://gssrr.org/index.php?journal=JournalOfBasicAndApplied>



The Iraqi Baathist Government and its Foreign Relations 1968- 1976

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Abstract

In the years since the left-wing Baathist Party came to power in July 1968 the party leadership has consolidated its hold and formed a relatively stable government in a state long noted for its disunity, instability and huge level of political violence. The position of the Baathist leadership has been enhanced by recent successes the dramatic hike in Petroleum prices in 1973, the defeat of Kurds and the accord with Iran in March 1975. These advantages have enabled the Second Baathist government to initiate new approaches to its domestic and foreign policies not possible in the early years of its rule. This article focus on these policy approaches and the forces shaping the operating assumption of the Second Baathist leadership in its decision making processes. Since the absence of any comprehensive Agency evaluation of Iraq in present years, a discussion of the second Baathist consolidation of power and the emergence of political, economic and social policies aimed at presenting internal unity and stability is showed along with an analysis of the sources of possible political warfare. This study concludes with an examination of present Iraqi foreign policy objective also their implication for the United States interests in the region. This article outlines the history and genesis of the second Baathist government in Iraq. This study presented a significant amount of positively not published details about these parties. Particular attention is given to link between the second Iraqi Baathist government and its reaction to the political transformation in Iraq. The Baathist government and the National front. The Baathist government regional and international relations. This study is a historical research based on qualitative study .This study is extensively used original texts of the United States Foreign Relations (FUR) documents.

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Keywords: The political development in Iraq; the Baathist government; Iraq's regional and international relations; Iran; the Kurds and the communists as well as the Iraqi policy implication for the US.

1. Introduction

The image of Iraq in the United States in present years has been that of a political troublemaker in the Middle East, an old-style enemy of states loyal to the US, and a violent, frequent tempestuous state ruled by ideologues. The Iraqi administrations relation with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its substantial oil resources provided other elements of uneasiness to Western policymakers. The image is not wholly incorrect, however, the reality of the successive governments ruled Iraq is altered as the governments' settles in. Nevertheless, the complexity of the Iraqi foreign policy also national politics is formidable and some aspects continue to be ambiguous [1].

A principal instance of the complexity and reality was Soviet-Iraqi diplomatic relations. While predictable scholar had declassified Iraq as a 'Client of the Soviet', Iraq prefers, has followed further would adhere to an independent, nonaligned foreign policy where feasible also when advantageous. It was not probable, despite present turnings to the West for advance weapons and technological aid, which Iraq might break its relationship with the Soviet also Eastern Europe. A present decrease in Soviet assistance further leverage would not mean a corresponding promote in the US influence. There would be, instead, a kept on reliance on the East moreover a probing of Western opportunities and encourages. The Baathist government in Iraq might carry out to obtain up-to date arms and military training from the USSR also aid in development projects. Nonetheless, Iraq might have advocate USSR foreign policy objectives simply where they concur with the Baathist government purpose and policies [1].

Prospects for the renewed of diplomatic relations between the US and Iraq were not well for the near future. Although the second Baathist government was motiving commercial and trade relations with the United States companies, it would not grant diplomatic recognition in order to gain favored nation status or extended purchasing privileges. Deficiency of diplomatic recognition was not a barrier to help and trade. Diplomatic relation between the two countries might contingent more upon the United States relations with Iraq's neighbours such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Iran than upon Iraq desires for US services and goods. Iraq's opinion, the US exerts huge influence upon Syria and Israeli activities. If the US were to change its position regarding Palestinian-Israeli affairs might possibly even recognize the PLO, then the Baathist may be responded and conferred diplomatic recognition as a reward. Nonetheless, main US concessions of this sort might not assure Baathist acceptance. Anti- imperialist and anti-US slogans were significant and conditioned reflexes in party arguments. The government may discovery itself limited by rhetorical restriction [1].

There was little likelihood of alter, then, in US-Iraqi relations, given the current administration's conception of US-policies and given US shore up for its allies in the Middle East region Israel, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Iraqi government remained outside the periphery of the US interests in the region. The prevailing Iraqi stance towards the US cool, gradually suspicious however not overtly hostile was possibly the best that can be expected, given the fundamental divergence interests. Hence, long as Iraq discovers it upsides to bar Soviet military use if its

facilities and cooperate in maintaining orderly relations among the several Gulf countries, it contributes, albeit inadvertently, to overall US objectives in the Middle East [1].

Iraq would appeal to form legitimate and routine relations with the Arab states in the Middle East, the Gulf and the Europe. The Iraqi government would also appeal prestige and respectability through attitudes that impose cooperation in Arab economic affairs. This policy was dictated through a desire to end the state's isolation from the Arab World, to receive secure oil lanes in the Gulf also to increase quantity of regional balance and stability. Therefore, Arab solidarity would be advocated in the competition with Israel, in cooperation in Gulf security arrangements further in forming Arab regional economic self-sufficiency. This did not mean that Iraq would adhere consistently to the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPCE) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) guidelines upon marketing or pricing its oil. Nor would the Baathist government disavow shore up for Arab guerrilla and liberation movements [1].

None of the above relates to relations with Syria. Disagreements over ideology, oil transit fees, Euphrates water sharing further primacy in the fertile crescent have and would keep on to divide the two states. Endeavours to subvert the Baathist government and the Baathist government of Hafiz Al-Assad in Syria would continue as would prop up for anti-Syrian factions in Lebanon. Nonetheless, it was not probable the two countries would go open war [1].

Harmony in Iraq was symbolized by the National Front, a coalition of Kurds, Communist and Baathist, however actual control was exercised by the Baathist Party of Iraq (BPI). Administration through National Front was a group; the Baathist leadership had no intention of contributing power or decision-making with any faction or group. There were no absolute competitors to the Baathist party or its government at the time. Possible sources of opposition exist in the Kurdish, Shia elements, the Iraqi Communist party (ICP) and the armed forces [1].

The Iraqi government ruled with the shore up of the armed forces however was not as contingent upon it to maintain that power as were previous Iraqi administrations or as was the Syrian Baathist regime. The armed forces was kept acquiescent through purges, enforced retirements further constant monitoring for ideological correctness. Although was not unanimity of prop up for the regime among the upper-ranking military there would be seen to be satisfaction with the regime's recent success against the Kurds also with the continued supply of sophisticated Soviet expertise and arms. While solid evidence was lacking of sustaining a coup d'état against the Baathist government at present-days [1].

The effect of the Communist Party was insignificant. Nominal participation in government has not resulted in a corresponding the political leverage. Spilt internally, over their participation in the Baathist National Front and cooperation by the BPI, the Communists needed the internal shore up and cohesion necessary to any hostility with the Baathist regime. Even though the Kurds and Shia represented a numerical majority in Iraq they would continue to dominate the political system, the party machinery, the officer corps and the government bureaucracy. This pattern of domination was a reflection of traditional Iraqi politics too of present party loyalties the politics of recruiting supporter and making political alliance among family, tribes and villages networks. Furthermore, while the number of competent professionals in the government was increasing, loyalty to the

party and the leadership also a lack of political goals were indispensable survival [1].

The government was endeavouring to structure a 'United Iraq' through the political, economic and social integration of these potential sources of opposition. The Baathist National Front now was the cosmetic political expression of that unity. The Baathist government was also using a 'carrot and stick policy' new schools and hospitals, housing, agrarian reforms, extended social benefits, construction of new factories also threats and resettlement. The emphasis would continue centralization, not regional autonomy, upon the union of Kurdish areas in north and south also not upon preferential advancement. If Kurdish dissidence re-emerges, as it feasibly would, or if the Shia oppose innovative reforms, as they have in the past, then the government would not opt for repression and resettlement [1].

The Second Baathist government, then would seem to be in firm control of the country and Iraqi president Ahmed Hassan Al-Baker and his vice-president Saddam Hussein were in firm control of the party. Policies formed by them were not probably to be altered through an alteration in government or party. If the president and the deputy were guaranteed of political power today, it was because of their successful manipulation of the party, the government and the military as well their capability to isolate and eliminate their opposition has been enhanced through present successes the formation of civilian control over the party, the government and the military forces; the end of the Kurdish movement; and the treaties and negotiations with the Soviet and Iran [1].

However, Al-Baker was still ill and might be out of touch with day-to day development. Saddam as Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and Deputy Secretary of the BPI regional command, was the certain center of power but the façade of join rule prevails. It was feasible that on the event of Baker's retirement or death, there would be an orderly transfer of power to Saddam Hussein. What was no obvious is whether the loyalties Baker holds in the military and the party were transferable. While the military might approve Saddam as a civilian ruler, they would be feasibly not approve him as a President and Staff General (he was elevated to this rank in January 1976), and minister defense, a post Baker now holds. Saddam may have to acquire an approvable senior military figure in order to maintain the appearance of unity and cooperation [1].

1.1. Iraq before the Second Baathist Government

The political dynamics of Iraq today were an outgrowth of its stormy history as an independent state. One of many countries whose boundaries were determined by great power rivalry and whose government was forced through colonial arrangement, Iraq has been the scene of power struggle and political violence since the British invasion of World War I. Although attained independent status in the 1930s, first with the end of the mandate and entrance into the League of Nations, and Second with the renegotiation of its oil and military agreements, Great Britain remained to exercise a right to intervene in affairs of state through the 1950s. These arrangements gave Iraq the semblance of independence and faction of unity under a Hashemite King and Cabinet. Coups in 1936 and 1941 introduced the military participation in Iraqi politics, a fundamental which might dispute the stability of the state for the next 30 years [1].

The emergence of the nationalist movement which inherently anti-imperialist, anti-British and anti-monarchist

had effect Iraq. By 1958, the bulk of politically-aware Iraqis shored up neither the monarchy, the British connection, nor the government's opposition to Nasser and Arab nationalism. A military coup of 14 July 1958 led by Abdul Karim Qassim toppled the Hashemite Kingdom and the Kingdom government of Nuri Al-Sai'd also ended special status of British in Iraq. It marked further the beginning of 15 years of political instability and disunity [2].

Under the Qassim administration, withdrew from the Baghdad Pact of 1955, recognized Communist-bloc countries, and started to limit relations with the West. Four coups, a dozen alters in cabinet and a civil war fought against the Kurds from September 1961 through 1970 contributed to the political chaos of the period. At the same time there was a withdrawal from participation in the politics of the Arab World. In direct contrast to its first 40 years of statehood, Iraq in the 1960s turned out to be increasingly isolated from contracts with both its Arab neighbours and the non-Arab World [3].

The themes of disunity and instability were evident in Iraq's economic and social development as well. To be an Iraqi in the fourth decade if independence was still to be in the first instance an Arab, Kurd or Turkman, a Sunni, Shia or Christian. Of the country's 11 million people, 25 percent were Sunni Arab centered in Baghdad and northwest of Iraq, 20 percent were Kurds living in the northeast, and 50 percent were Shia Arabs living south of Baghdad in the Middle Euphrates region. The country continued fragmented among ethnic and religious communities having only a brief history of cooperation and a limited sense of national identity. Ethnic groups remained to live in traditional areas adhering to traditional practices. The government had done little to further industrial development, regional integration, or agrarian reform. The political system continued dominated by Sunni politicians through their control of access to positions in the government from either the Kurdish or Shia 'minorities' were rare, despite the fact that the Shias provided 80 % of the enlisted men in the military and despite the repeated threats of civil violence by the Kurds [4].

Baathism was a main element in the rise of Arab nationalism in Iraq. The Baathist party, formed in Syria in the 1940s, aimed at the political renaissance of the Arab nation in a unified based in principles of social justice and economic. For Baathist the Arab revolution was to be fought against two colonialisms: foreign imperialists opposed to Arab unity and independence, and domestic enemies who exploited the nation's goods and resources. While the prospect of Arab unity may have had limited attraction for Iraqis, the twin themes of independence and socialism had great appeal; in 1952, the BPI was formed as a regional unit of the Baathist party centered in Syria. By 1958, branches of the BPI had been formed in most of the cities of Iraq [4].

The Baathist first endeavoured to rule Iraq came in February 1963 with the overthrow of Qassim. It failed for several factors. The party was badly organized and its leaders inexperienced. Once in power, the Baathist had no actual agenda for the transformation of Iraq, no outline for applying Baathist ideology or Arab socialism to the reality of the country, and little popular support during its nine months in power. Rivalries and tensions within the party itself, between Baathist and Arab nationalist over union with Syria and Egypt, and between the BPI and the Communist party of Iraq (CPI) [5].

The stage was set for counterrevolution, it came in November 1963 when Abdul Salam Arif, a nationalist Arab

officer then in favour of union with Egypt, assumed power. While Arif was in power Iraq's foreign policy emphasized pan-Arab and pro-Egyptian themes; in domestic policy, lip-service was paid to the Islamic origin of social and political reforms. Nonetheless, the reason that shaped economic and political realities under Nuri Al-Sai'd and Abdul Karim Qassim continued to shape the realities of Iraq for five years under Abdul Salam Arif and his brother Abdul Rahman Arif succeeded Abdul Salam in 1966. Arab unity continued a theory, nationalization a slogan, Iraq in the 1960s was no closer to solving its matters of political instability and disunity than Iraq in the 1950s [5].

Provincial jealousies with the Syrian Baathist Party (BPS) and distrust over Syria's attitude of intellectual trusteeship for Iraqi Baathist continued to divide the Iraqi Baathist from their natural allies in Syria, in 1966, Michael Aflaq, the founder of Baathism in Syria and titular head of the Party, and several Iraqis were expelled from the Baathist Party National Command, the centered in Damascus. The disputes was factional, not ideological, although all debate since this split has emphasized the purity and correctness of Baathism of Iraqi Baathism in contrast to the Syrian version. After the 1966, split the Iraqis reorganized the party in Iraq, forming both a regional and a national (pan-Arab) command and offering shelter ousted by Syrian intraparty coups. The BPI and BPS have maintained mutually hostile exclusive structures since 1966 [1].

2. The Political Transformation in Iraq

There were two coups in the summer of 1968. On 17 July 1968, a coalition of Baathist and nationalist in the military led by Ahmed Hassan Al-Baker and Major Abdul Al-Razzaq Al-Naif toppled the Abdul Rahman Arif administration. The inability of the Arif government to deal with Iraq's domestic problems was the reason--or excuse--for the coup, and the new government is talking mainly about economic reforms, eliminating corruption and solving the Kurdish problem. They have made the usual statements about Zionism, Imperialism and Arab unity, but so far there have been no indications that Iraq's foreign policy will become more radical. It was too early to know whether there will be progress on a Kurdish settlement or more trouble--a key determinant of how free Iraqi troops will be to menace Israel [6].

A national front government was formed with no one groups in apparent control. Al-Baker, a Baathist who had been prime minister in the 1963 first Baathist government, became President of the Republic and Naif Prime Minister. Of the 26 men appointed to the government only seven were Baathists [7]. However, this 'cooperation' was short-lived. Two weeks later the Baathist left-wing took power directly in a second which eliminated Naif and the Nationalist. His exile, and the murder of his foreign minister of affairs Nasser Al-Hani, marked the end to a policy of seeking restoration with the East, the West and moderate Arab countries, and depend Iraq's isolation. The BPI now absolutely dominated the government through the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), whose members were Baker and four general, all Baathist [7-6].: Hardan Al-Tikriti, Salih Mahdi Ammash, Sadun Ghaydan Al-Ani, and Hammad Shihab. Baker became prime minister as well as president of the Republic and Commander-in-chief of the armed forces; Hardan Al-Tikriti and Ammash were appointed Deputy Prime Ministers. Baathist were given control of crucial ministerial positions, including foreign affairs ministry, interior, education, health, labor, and social affairs, culture and information. For the next several years, the BPI would move to consolidate its power while maintaining control of a 'progressive'

Iraq attuned to Baathist principles of unity, independence and socialism [1].

2.1 *The Baathist Party in Power between 1968 and 1973*

The important thing is not assume the power but to keep it... Taking over the power is a simple operation that can be executed by a group of adventures and military coup amateurs at the right time. But interaction with the masses, expressing their interests and aspiration, can only be carried out by ideological revolutionaries... the Arab Socialist Baathist Party, Iraqi Region 'Wa'ial Taaliah' (Awareness of the Vanguard), September 1968 [1].

Although the Baathist Party of Iraq contained both a military and a civilian groups at the time of the July coups, the military dominated the politics of the party and the state. From 1968 through 1973 the energies and ambitions of these two factions were absorbed in intraparty conflict and power plays, conflicts which disrupted Iraq's search for stability and development. A series of purges beginning in 1969 changed the position of the military in both the government and the party and projected the civilian groups and a new leader, Saddam Hussein Al-Tkriti, to power. First, to be accused of plotting against the new regime were those in favour of pan Arab union; this was followed in January 1969 by a purge of top military commanders. One month later a major spy network alleged by high ranking military and government argued it was being encircled by a conspiracy of the CIA, Zionism, the Shah of Iran and the Barzani Kurds.

In the next four years Baker and Saddam were capable to isolate and destroy their challengers for power and consolidate their control over the party and the government. In November 1969, the power base if the government was moved considerably with the addition of 10 civilian members of the party's Regional and National commands to the RCC. The move engineered by Saddam Hussein and Salih Mahdi Ammash, then interior minister, limited the influence of the military in the politics of the Republic and broadened the base of shore up for the government among party members. Saddam Hussein, already Deputy Secretary of the BPI Regional Command, was appointed Deputy Chairman of the RCC; he could now assume Baker's tasks and powers in the event of the president absence or incapacity a powerful position for the head of the party's civilian faction. Al-Baker and Saddam next took advantage of the rivalry between Hardan Al-Tikriti and Ammash, both members of the RCC and both cabinet minister holding powerful positions, to remove their two strongest opponents. In April 1970, Hardan and Ammash were sworn in as Vice-Presidents of Iraq. Six months later Harddan was dismissed from office and exiled; a year later he was assassinated in Kuwait. Ammash survived politically until 1971 when he was removed from all positions in the government and the party and appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union [1].

Purges in the armed forces, the party and the government remained. They were explained by the leadership as necessary in order to unite the country, to strengthen they party, and to end Iraq's external isolation from the Arab World. Indeed, the purges revealed the basic instability of Iraqi politics, the ascendancy of personalities and the lack if any actual issues in defining either political actions or actors. The purges were precipitated by various crises, both staged and real: Jordan's war against the Palestinian Fedayeen in 1970, the Kurdish war which ended in 1970, support for a national front and willingness to cooperate with Communist and nationalist. At first, Baker, Saddam and Ammash were aligned together against Hardan in a military –civilian clash; then

Baker and Saddam opposed Ammash in an interparty struggle for power. And the positions of the actors on the issues were never consistent, Saddam favored both war and negotiation with the Kurds; Ammash reportedly both favored and opposed Communist participation in the government. The only survivors in these scenarios were the President and his deputy, Baker and Saddam Hussein [1].

2.2 *The Kazzar Coup d'état of 1973*

The years from 1968 through 1973 were a key period of the Iraqi Baathist government. Waves of clandestine captures of Communist, left-wing Baathist, Jews and foreigners continued amid revelations of countless plots, again imputed to the CIA, the Zoinists, and the Shah of Iran. In 1970, nearly 1000 people were hanged as spies in liberation square and a reporter for the Christian Science Monitor could write in understatement that "Fear was rampant", yet at the same time the government wrote a new constitution, instituted a series of land reforms, negotiated a Kurdish settlement, and endeavoured to heal a four-year old rift relations with Baathist Party founder Michael Aflaq. Stirrings of a foreign policy could also be detected Iraq became the first Arab country to recognize East Germany and a delegation was sent to the Soviet Union. Some measure of stability and order was being restored. However, the purges were not yet over. An abortive coup in 1973 set the stage for further readjustment of the party and the government [1].

In June 1973, President Baker was in Eastern Europe concluding a series of economic and cultural agreements. On 30 June 1973, the day of his planned return, Nazim Kazzar, the Director General of Public Security, arrested Minister of Defense Talib Shabib and ministers of Interior Ghaydan. When an apparent plan to assassinate Baker failed, Kazzar took his hostages and fled for the Iranian border. Shabib was killed in the escape; Ghaydan wounded and Kazzar surrendered.

Little known of the background, motive, or leaders of the coup d'état attempt. That it was a bid for power was clear; whose bid it was remains unclear. It might have been engineered by Saddam Hussein. He had appointed Kazzar, a Shia, director of national security in November 1969 and Kazzar remained a supporter and close friend of the deputy. The coup d'état, hence might have been intended as a means of consolidating Saddam's power over the military by eliminating the generals and Baker himself. Or Saddam might have been the object of plotters who opposed his increasing power and his stance on the Kurdish issue, Fedayeen, or the Soviet Union. Leading military officers were known to be dissatisfied with government policies on these issues and to favor taking drastic action against the Kurds and in support of the Fedayeen. However, the army remained loyal to the government during the coup and foiled that endeavour [1].

Kazzar had set several conditions for the release of his prisoners: that the Iraqi army be sent to the Palestinian battleground, that military action against the Kurds be resumed, that rightist leaders be removed from the government and the party, and that the dominant role of the Regional Command of the BPI be given to the National command. The last two demands were used to implicate Abdu Al-Khaliq Al-Samarria, party theoretician and rival of Saddam, in the plot. Kazzar and 35 others were executed; Abdul Khaliq's death sentence was first commuted to life imprisonment, then to exile in Algeria. The BPI was purged of Samarrai supporters and in August, two months after the coup endeavour, Baker delegated to Saddam Hussein full

responsibility for holding party elections that fall. From November 1973 through February 1974, 250 military officers were 'retired', for example replaced by pro-BPI officers most of whom were supporters of the party [1].

The coup d'état endeavoured had other far-reaching political ramifications. With the death of Shabib, only Baker and Saddam Ghaydan continued of those officers who had made the 1978 coup. Ghaydan was demoted a year after the coup from interior to communications minister and the military was hence excluded from top policy-making positions in the government. Saddam Hussein and the civilian wing of the BPI Regional Command emerged in full control of both the party and the government. Baker remained the focus for military support, however, as a possible counter to the growing influence of the civilians and Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, the president now assumed the post of defense Minister while the RCC issued a resolution decreeing decisions of the president of the Republic and Defense Minister to be final. The Cabinet was reorganized a year later, given budgetary and administrative responsibilities, and several members of the regional Command added to it, by November 1974, the member of the RCC and the Cabinet with few exceptions were Baathist [1].

3. The National Front Government 1973-1976

The purges and the constant reshuffling of military and civilian personal were meant to stabilize the government and consolidate support for Baker and Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless, the constant rumors of plots and the repressive tactics utilized by the regime had alienated and frightened many political moderates. Party members to the left of the government continued to demand quick nationalization of industry and drastic economic and social reforms. If the regime were to survive, the internecine strife which had marked its history thus far had to stop. If the government were to obtain the foreign military aid and development assistance it desired, the appearance of political unity and stability was key. In the fall of 1971, sometime before the Kazzar coup, the Baathist government supported different tactic to consolidate shore up for the regime and stabilize the system. President Baker declared on 15 November an "historic opportunity for the progressive national patriotic forces of the country- the National Action Charter". The Charter guaranteed 'all the democratic freedoms of the people,' a national assembly and a permanent constitution to be approved by public referendum. More significant, it called for an alliance among the BPI, the CPI and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP) as the "foundation stone of the national coalition". However, neither the CPI nor the KDP indicated a willingness to subscribe to the National Action Charter or join a National Front Government. Discussions among the parties kept on for almost two year [1].

In July 1973, one month after Kazzar coup d'état endeavour, Baker and the pro-Soviet Central Committee of the CPI, in a show of national unity, signed an accord which called for the formation of a council of ministries, the establishment of a national assembly, and the formation of a national front government. The central government of Baathist party in Baghdad talked with the Kurds for a similar agreement continued however the KDP rejected to join either the negotiations or the front. The intention of the BPI in setting up the National Front Government was more cosmetic than cooperative. Despite the agreement with the CPI, power and policy emanate neither from the Front, the RCC, the Cabinet of Ministers nor was the party per se. Rather, power exercised directly by Ahmed Hassan Al-Baker, president of the Republic, Chairman of the RCC and Secretary of the BPI Regional Command, and Saddam Hussein Command. They, in return, were maintained in power through their control of

the party, the government bureaucracy, the military and secret police [1].

3.1 *The Baathist Party Government*

The relationship between the party and the government was a symbiotic one. The relationship was defined shortly after the 30 July 1968 coup in a party manifesto: " the Party apparatus must be made to understand the relation between the role of the party and that of the regime, and distinguish between the former as a vanguard organization and the latter as an executive arm (government). The role of the party today differs by necessity for the role of the government, not on general principles and relations with the masses but with regard to the difference between official position and party position.... As for the part, its role is guide the policy of the regime and make plans for carrying out the policy". 'Awareness of the vanguard'.

The party monitors and supervises the government on two levels. First, a monopoly of power is maintained through the appointment of member and sympathizers to key positions in the administration, the military, the police and intelligence agencies, part member dominate the RCC and hold all key ministerial and diplomatic posts. Party members also staff the various committees of the RCC which 'follow up' government decisions, for instance, the follow-up Committee for oil affairs and the implementations of agreements. On the provincial level governors and key administrations are chosen from party ranks serve to make Baathist influence felt throughout the administrative apparatus. There is, however, little information about the party affairs and party/ government relations at this level [1].

Secondly, party power is exercised through the various bureaus within the organization structure of the BPI Regional Command which implement leadership decisions. These include a peasant bureau, a workers bureaus, a student bureau, a cultural bureau and a military bureau. The first four direct the activities of 'mass; organization of peasant workers, and the like; they were used to mobilize efforts of their member and to indoctrinate in them in the party's line.

The role of the military bureau was crucial to the regime. Its members include the Commanders of the Baghdad Garrison and the Republican Guard Brigade, both key factors in the making and unmaking of past Iraqi administrations. Control of the Guard and the Garrison was essential to the regime. Further key was that the Baathist intelligence subversion, assassination which was concerned principally with internal security, foreign political subversion, assassination and information gathering; a component of the Baathist intelligence bureau, the Jihaz Al-Huwayan [instrument of yearning], was responsible for captures and interrogations. The party bureaus and all government committees were directly responsible to Saddam Hussein. Party discipline is maintained through periodic purges from the government and the party, indoctrination courses for the military, and occasional reorganization of civil services and armed forces with recruitment of new members from party ranks [1].

In October 1975, with the aim of fulfilment "the theory of join Struggle.... For revolutionary change", the People's army was created, replacing the Baathist party National Front Guard. The People's Army could play a key role in party and state affairs than its predecessor, however. The avowed purpose of the new militia is to

protect the party and the government as well as to assist the police and the armed forces 'in carrying out their national and pan-Arab duties', this as distinct from the regular army's mission of protecting the people and the state. The 'national' function of the forces, estimated from military [and the CPI] as it was to cooperate with it. The 'pan-Arab' aspect, broadly interpreted, could include use of the people's army in Lebanon to assist pro-Iraqi Fedayeen and in the Gulf to support Arab liberation Front activities.

Although the government's intension regarding use of the People's Army are still unclear, indeed it was organized along paramilitary lines and was being trained by both Baathist army officers and Cuba military advisor in weaponry and guerilla warfare tactics, leaves open the possibility of its use extremely also domestically. It was conceivable, as well as, that the People's Army could be used in the event that an intraparty power struggle develops, it was headed by Taha Al-Jazrawi, minister of housing and public works, member of the RCC and a senior official in the BPI Regional Command since the 1960s [1].

Little is known of the size and composition of the general Baathist party membership. In the 1960s, the party was of necessity small and clandestine with its members being primarily young civil servants, teachers and intellectuals. Although, the struggles and purges of the last decade have eliminated many of the party's early members, new membership seem still to be drawn from similar backgrounds. A 1972, estimate set party membership at 5,000- 9,000 active members. There is no way of judging the accuracy of these figures. Membership data for the party and its commands are not available, even the membership of the RCC is not publicized.

It has been known more of the BPI Regional Command, composed of Baker, Saddam Hussein and a dozen senior party officials chosen in January 1974 at the Baathist Party Congress. They were the party in microcosm for the most part young average age in their 30s to 40s with little experience outside the party, men who held no positions before the coups of 1968 and whose status within the party depends on factors other than professional competence or merit. Most members of the regional command had degrees in law, education or medicine; all hold high government posts and have served in party ranks for many years [1].

Nor is much known of the Baathist recruitment process. The party has traditionally appealed to educated and professional people, particularly university students earning degrees in engineering, law, medicine, government and education. New recruits were still sought in the schools and universities and especial assistance is offered to students and young officers joining the party; the party had further established youth cadres in the provinces with the emphasis on 'correct' training and party indoctrination. While party membership is a necessary tool for advancement and promotion to any important post, the ramifications of membership in terms of education and general employment opportunities are clear.

While there have been and are Kurds, Shias and even a Christian in the government, the Baathist party in power at that time represents a continuation of the pattern of Sunni Arab dominance which has characterized Iraqi politics since the mandate time. Recruitment for party membership and leadership roles in the government still was most frequently from the towns of Tikrit and Sammara north of Baghdad on the Tigris River, and from Anah, Haditha and Hit, northwest of Baghdad on the Euphrates River. The political center of gravity, thus, is a

triangle encompassing the Baghdad, Mosul, Anah region and excluding the Kurdish region in the north and the Shia tribal areas in the south. However, too much emphasis can be placed on the accident of geography. It is the kinship reason, the dependence on family and clan loyalty, and party affiliation which influence political relationship and appointment. Broadened recruitment procedures, then do not indicate any democratization of the party. The Baathist party at that time continued as a political organization which continues to set a premium on isolation and secrecy. The structure remains highly centralized and authoritarian. Uncompromising, determined often ruthless, its leaders have not hesitated to use suppress any suspicion of opposition [1].

The national front in 1976 was a vehicle by which the fiction of unity and participatory government was maintained by the Baathist. There was no national assembly. Power was still exercised by few with the business of government determined by personalities, not by institutions and not by constitutional procedures. Both the RCC and the Cabinet were Baathist dominated and reflect the views of the president and the deputy. While the certain work of the government was conducted through the committee and bureau structures, neither these nor any other group in the National Front has the ability to influence or alter government policy decisions [1].

3.2 *The Kurds and the National Front*

The Kurds have posed a consistent threat to the internal security and stability of several government in Iraq. The Baathist government warned the Kurds in the National Action Charter of 1970 that the "peaceful and democratic solution of the Kurdish national issue was tied to the preservation of the existing revolutionary regime". It was not within the factions dominating Kurdish tribal life. It was a key, however, to consider the Baathist approach to the Kurdish issue and to place the issue in the context of Iraq's relations with Iran and US [1].

signing of an armistice agreement between the Kurds led by Mullah Mustafa Barzani and the Iraqi government represented by Saddam Hussein. The agreement recognized the national rights of the Kurdish people and granted regional and educational institution, including a university at Sulamanyiah, were to be established. Kurds would be appointed to posts in the government, the military, the police and the universities in proportion to their number. The KDP was reformed and the Baathist government promised to appoint a Kurd vice-president of the Republic. Areas having a Kurdish majority were to be administered by the Ministry for Northern affairs. Barzani retained his heavy arms and a radio station, while the government promised to pay his Peshmarga troops (12,000-15,000 men) to act as a frontier force [8].

The agreement marked a high point in Iraqi-Kurdish relations. Barzani had control of more territory than he had ever held, with a formally recognized KDP, a newspaper, a radio station, and the promised of participation in the government of the country. His Peshmarga force was armed and intact. He had yielded nothing. On 29 March, five Kurds, all supporter of Barzani, were appointed to the cabinet. Ten days later, Barzani denied he had ever intended to establish an independent Kurdistan, he stated that: " I only defend my people's rights within Iraq. He also claimed from now on we, as people attached to the policy of the Iraqi government, will do our best to improve relations established between Iraq and Turkey and other countries" [9].

Essentially, two issues were emerged: power and oil. Kurdish officials may have been appointed to the cabinet,

but no Kurds were appointed to the RCC, and the Baathist rejected the nominee for vice-president. A census was to be taken to determine the boundaries of the Kurdish autonomous region; where the Kurds were not in a majority, the territory was to revert to the administration of the central government. The census was not taken and the Kurds accused the government of replacing 'Arabizing' traditional Kurdish areas, for instance, Kirkuk and Sinjar, and of 'weakening' the policy of decentralization in the autonomous provinces of Erbil, Sulamaniyyah and Duhok [10]. The Iraqi government-Kurdish relations were strained. The Kurdish leader Barzani advocate the formation of a national front, freedom for political parties and the implementation, at an accelerated rate, of the agreement of 11 march 1970. The Baathist government was adamantly opposed to the first two demands; and, although it is sincere in its willingness and readiness to implement the Kurdish-Iraqi agreement, it has decided to go about it at a very slow pace [11].

Initially, the Kurds had not sought to administer the oil installation in Kirkuk; they had asked for a proportion share of the oil revenues and they insisted that Kirkuk city, center of the Iraq Petroleum Company, become the new capital of the Kurdish autonomous region. The city, despite its location in a Kurdish region, had a mixed Arab, Kurd, Assyrian and Turkman population. To influence a planned plebiscite, the government brought back Assyrian families who had fled Kirkuk during the revolt to counterbalance Kurds moving in for voting purpose. The plebiscite was not held and the dispute escalated. Did the right to profit from the mineral and natural resources of the autonomous region belong to the central government or to the Kurds? Did the Kurds have, in effect, control of their province and its resources? The Kurds rejected to sign the National Action Charter, they rejected to join the national front or to nominate another vice-president. Nor would they agree to a constitution or to definition of their relations with Iran. They demanded increased budget allocations for development to be controlled by a Kurdish development committee. The government continued to reject Kurdish demands for Kirkuk. Then the BPI attempted to assassinate Barzani and his son Idirs. A stalemate ensued until February 1974 when fighting once again broke out [1].

On 11 March 1974, four years after the initial agreement had been signed and the date by which it was to have been fulfillment, the RCC declared the granting of self-rule to the region in which the majority of residents were Kurds. Erbil would be the capital city of the autonomous region which would have a legislature, an executive council and an especial budget with revenues derived from property taxes. The KDP rejected this unilateral declaration of autonomy and more clashes were become part of a voluntary federation with the Arabs of Iraq and Mullah Mustafa Barzani, by virtue of his position as chairman of the Kurdish Executive Council, would be Vice President of the Republic. This the Baathist rejected and major fighting ensued [12].

Hence the issue emerged as the Kurdization of the north versus the Arabization of Kurdistan, depending on one's perspective. In April the government replaced the Barzani Kurds in the Cabinet with Kurds loyal to the administration and it was declared that the Kurdish movement would soon join the BPI and the CPI in the National Front. The following autumn, the midst of war with the Kurds, the government formed an executive and a legislative assembly for the autonomous region [13].

The timing may have been an outcome of the Baathist to carry out the census while insisting on the four-year time table for implementation of the 1970 agreement. Or, it may have been a direct outcome of worsening

relations with Iran and encouragement given Mustafa Barzani by the Shah. In a speech made in April 1970 Saddam Hussein noted that somewhat cryptically that: " those who sell themselves to foreigners will never become our allies as long as we live and as long as this revolution exists. To people who imagine that with US help they can obstruct the march of the revolution and with US help they can divide this people, we tell them without hesitation, with high confidence and without delusion, with accurate calculations, and with a clear vision of the present and future aims- we tell them: You will only meet failure" [1].

Barzani sought aid from many sources the United States, Israel as well as Iranian. With the Soviet Union support and military assistance now flowing to the Baathist government and with the CPI fighting on the side of the government, Barzani told the Christian Science Monitor that his group stood in the way of Soviet influence in Iraq. Mullah Mustafa Barzani now envisioned a Kurdish state within a state which would represent all Kurds, those physically present in the autonomous region as well as those living outside the region, in Baghdad, Basra or even outside Iraq. He disavowed, however, any ambitions to expand his demands to include the sizable Kurdish populations in Turkey and Iran. The issue, however, is not whether the promise of foreign assistance permitted the Kurds to revolt in 1974. The revolt most probably would have occurred at some point, given the nature of Kurdish demands and the reluctance of any Iraqi government, be it Baathist or not, to accede to these demands [14].

The revolt created several internal dilemmas for the Baathist leadership. Differences on the conduct of the war, the planning of the offensives, and a negotiated peace threatened to divide both government and the party in Iraq. The military had opposed the 1970 Kurdish agreement as a 'profound humiliation', feeling that the Kurds had been militarily [15]. They disapproved Saddam's conducting negotiation in 1970 with the Kurds and negotiations and his stand 1974 stand opposing negotiation and favoring war. There may have been disagreement between Baker and the Deputy as well, over the wisdom of continuing the military campaign, conditions in 1974, however, clearly differed from those influencing the 1970 decision to negotiate with Barzani. The Baathist was in firmer control of both the political and military scene than it had been prior. The Iraqi army in 1974 was larger, better equipped, and better trained than the 1970 forces which had fought the Kurds. The Soviet military and technical aid was available in a steady flow without the caveats of the 1970 (then the Soviets had stipulated that war materiel supplied by them was not to be used against the Kurd). Significant, as well, was the decision made by Saddam Hussein to commit both country's resources and his personal prestige to seek a military solution to the latest Kurdish movement. The recurring Kurdish conflict had the potential to disrupt the Baathist regime just as it had disrupted previous governments. The stability of the regime as well as the prestige of the Deputy were at stake in resolving the Kurdish issue [10].

The death knell for the latest Kurdish movement was sounded not by the Baathist government but by Iran. Iran had long encouraged Kurdish movement in Iraq; indeed the Shah's moral support and military assistance enabled Barzani to conduct extensive warfare against several Iraqi governments. The Shah's support for the Kurds until the last war was gratuitous at best a means to contain a pro-Soviet Arab Socialist state. Helping the Kurds had become an expensive risk for the Shah by late 1974, however Iranian planes and troops were increasingly involved in border incidents with Iraqi troops and were close to fighting directly with Iraqi forces. More significant, though, it is doubtful that the Shah really wanted a Kurdish victory- Iraq's Kurds, if granted

provincial autonomy or if successful in winning independent status, would represent a far greater threat to the unity of Iran than would an Iraqi government victory [1].

For reasons strategic and political, then Iraq and Iran chose to resolve their differences and seek a more pacific solution to the escalating conflict. The solution was framed in the Algiers Accord of March 1975 which called for demarcation of territorial and maritime borders and 'the establishment of mutual security and confidence along their joint borders to put a final end to all subversive infiltration from either side' [16]. In the accords following the Algiers Accord Iraq made several concessions resistance to the Shah and had claim to the province of Khuzestan in Iran as a part of the Arab homeland. The Baathist government now conceded all claims to Khuzestan, and agreed to a boundary along the center of the Shatt-Al-Arab. It also acceded to other territorial border territorial arrangements long sought by Iran, in return, stopped aiding the Kurds, Iraq gained much in return for its concessions. Instead of making yet another agreement with the Kurds to end yet another war, the Iraqi government signed an accord with Iran which both stopped the fighting and ended the threat of foreign intervention [17].

In the wake of the Algiers Accord, the Kurdish front collapsed and between 90,000 and 25,000 refugees fled to Iran, by the end of 1975 the majority if the Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Iran had taken advantage of the amnesty offered to return to Iraq. The policy of the Baathist government toward the question of the Kurdish autonomy has taken a predictable tack [18]. References to Kurdistan or to the Kurdish region have been dropped in favor of references to the 'autonomous' or 'northern' province. Many returning Kurds were being resettled in small groups in agricultural farms in southern Iraq while the government was encouraging the 'Arabization' of the north, for instance, it encouraged Arab settlement in the north and intermarriage of Arab and Kurds [19]. The government was also extending its control in the region through the establishment of state-owned agricultural cooperatives, land redistribution, the funding of development projects, and the construction of new cities. New schools, new industries, new hospitals, and extended social benefits the north, then, is to be transformed and unified with the south. Centralization, not autonomy, will be the key to any future northern policy with emphasis on the unity of Iraq, not the national rights of the Kurds [20].

Prospects for a large renewal of hostilities between the Kurds and the Iraqi government were unlikely at present. Kurdish acquiescence to Baathist appeals for unity and cooperation will depend very much on the extent of the settlement program in the South, the scope of Arabization in the north and the benefits to be realized from development programs in the autonomous region [21]. While the Algiers Accord removed Iran as a major sources of assistance and encouragement, the Kurds could now become pawns in the Syrian –Iraqi rivalry. Syria has offered shelter, training and supplies to Jalal Talabani, rival of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, and his Kurdish revolutionary movement in their guerrilla operations against Iraq. This support would escalate if the level animosities between the two Baathist states escalate. Similar, any increase in Iraqi influence which might create a shift in the balance of power as perceived in Tehran could renew the Shah's interest in the Kurds of Iraq [1].

3.3 *The Iraqi Communist Party and the National Front*

Relations between the Iraqi Communist Party (CPI) and the BPI prior to the establishment of the National Front in 1973, were tenuous at best. A semblance of cooperation had been maintained for several years before the 1958 coup, but Qassbi's policy of balancing off domestic forces had seen the CPI encouraged at the expense of others factions. The CPI was henceforth perceived as 'the enemy' by the Baathist and a contest for power between the two factions began. It quickly developed into a blood feud, during which the Communist sought and found opportunities to eliminate Baathists. Wholesale killing at Mosul in 1959 laid the foundations of a pervasive hatred by Iraqi Baathist of Iraqi Communists.

The time for revenge came in 1963. The brief period of Baathist rule was marked by rigid anti-Communist policies and a brutal suppression of the CPI, with party members killed, captured or exiled. The Communist managed to survive, however, and to reorganize despite internal splits. A 1972, estimate put party membership at 2,000; by 1974 membership was estimated at 4,000, not enough to pose a threat to the Baathist government. Traditionally, the CPI has been stronger in the Kurdish and Shia areas of the country; unlike the BPI; the CPI has always been more successful in attracting peasant and worker adherents although it no longer has support from the trade that it had decades ago.

After the coup of 1968, as a gesture of reconciliation to the pro-Soviet Central Committee of the CPI, Iraqi citizenship was restored to Communists in exile. This raised once again the issue of cooperation with the BPI, an issue which still threatens to divide the CPI today. Initially, Aziz Muhammad, first secretary of the Central Committee, opposed cooperation with BPI while Amir Abdullah, also an influential member of the Central Committee, favored joining the BPI in a progressive nationalist front so long as it opposed imperialism. A third faction within the Central Committee opposed any and all cooperation with the BPI, fearing the ultimate intention of the Baathist regime was the destruction of the CPI [1].

Where Aziz Muhammad feared Baathist dominance of and control over the CPI, Amir Abdullah supposed a policy of cooperation would inevitably make the Baathist government dependent on the Communists. Amir Abdullah's position was upheld by the Soviet policy at this time. As part of a growing rapprochement with Iraq and the Arab World, Soviet officials began in 1972 to pressure the CPI to sign the National Action Charter and join the National Front Government. Then, in June 1972, during a visit by Soviet foreign minister of affairs Kosygin to Baghdad, the USSR and Iraq signed a 15 year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Aziz Muhammad, convinced the Soviet would not support a divergent CPI policy, revised his position and in July 1973 signed the pact that established the National Front in Iraq. The CPI appeared to have won a major victory- it was now a legal party with the opportunity to rebuild its organization as well as the hope of influential government policy.

Soviet insistence on CPI participation in the government influenced the Baathist as well as the communists. From the Baathist point of view, however, domestic needs were a paramount consideration. The Baathist wished to resolve matters of domestic disunity, for instance, a possible renewal of Kurdish hostilities, and economic development, for example, assistance in developing the oil industry. In 1971-1973 a political alliance with the

CPI seemed necessary, given Soviet and CPI support for the Kurdish movement and Iraqi dependence on Soviet military aid and technological assistance. Yet the Soviets could not eliminate the distrust of Iraqi communist for the BPI and could not enhance the position of the CPI in the government. Although Amir Abdullah's views prevailed and the CPI joined the Front, Aziz Muhammad's suspicions have proved to be correct. The Baathist was not interested in sharing power with the Communist or the Kurds and cooperation between the CPI and the BPI remains limited at best.

Although the Soviet and the CPI dropped their support to the Kurdish movement and although the latter fought in the north in 1974 against Barzani, the Baathist rejected Aziz Muhammad's suggestion that a joint military command be formed and rejected the communist suggestions that CPI units be integrated with regular Iraqi army units. Communist units fighting in the north on the side of the government were allegedly kept short of arms and equipment. The CPI was not allowed to establish branches in captured Kurdish areas and, following the March 1975 Accord with Iran, Iraqi military commanders were ordered to prohibit heavy concentrations of CPI forces and to keep CPI units out of populated areas in the north, of the 60 members appointed to the Committee for Northern (Kurdistan) affairs in 1974 only five were CPI members.

Other dissatisfactions arose: despite the appointment of several communists to the Cabinet and the promise of cooperation on affairs of state, there has been virtually no policy consultation between the Baathist government and the CPI. (Of its known leaders, Aziz Muhammad, Aziz Sharif and Mukarram Al-Talabani whom themselves were Kurds, Amir Abdullah, only two now serve in the Cabinet : Amir Abdullah as Minister of state and Mukarram Al-Talabani as minister of Irrigation). A proposal by the CPI in fall 1974 to establish a joint higher committee on economic problems was rejected by the Baathist government. Nor did the CPI approve of the initiatives made by the Baathist government to 'right wing' Arab governments, for instance Saudi Arabia and Jordan, begun in 1974. Such relations, it was claimed, risked Iraq's relations with the Soviet Union.

Although the fiction of government by National Front is being maintained, the policy of cooperation did not survive the end of the Kurdish war. By spring 1975, the CPI members in ranking civil service positions and in universities were being replaced by BPI members and the party is closely watched for signs of opposition. The CPI was no real threat to the Baathist government and can easily be held in check by it and by the people's Army. Although the CPI recently held its Third National Congress, there little information available on the party's sources of support or organizational structure, fearing a recurrence of repression, the CPI will maintain a clandestine organization even while it functions as a legitimate member of the National front [1].

4. Internal Necessity and Foreign Relation

In foreign policy, as in domestic politics, 'Iraq First' was the basic priority of the Baathist government. Again, it is not a new theme; in the five decades since independence it has been the objective of Nuri Al-Sai'd and Abdul Karim Qassim, of Abdul Salam Arif and now of Baker and Saddam Hussein. Before the 1958 coup Nuri advocated cooperation with the West and membership in the Baghdad Pact despite the increasing unpopularity of such policies in the Arab World. Then 80 percent of Iraq's foreign trade imports came from Great Britain, Western Europe and the US; these same countries bought 59 percent of the country's exports.

Since the 1958, coup, successive Iraqi governments have persuaded several course of action. Qassim and the brothers Arif chose non-alignment, forming relations with the Eastern Europe while maintaining relations with the West. Foreign trade East and West. After the 1968, the Baathist moved foreign policy to one realignment, preferring to develop relations with East and those considered ideologically sympathetic. Internally the shifts in foreign policy reflected Baathist concentration on domestic politics, on the need to form legitimacy and maintain control. Externally the moves resulted in a deepening isolation from the West and the Arab World [1].

Beginning in 1974 a more flexible approach in the conduct of foreign relations, if not in the language of foreign policy could be discerned. The move reflected Iraq's new oil wealth and the Baathist government's new self-confidence. Now the government of Iraq was beginning to seek recognition and influence through relations with its Arab and non-Arab neighbours as well as with the west. Iraq under Baker and Saddam was re-emerging as a participant in the affairs of the Arab World, the Gulf and the West. Instead of isolation, participation; instead of conformation, cooperation.

Despite the changes in government and politics in Iraq in the past several decades, a continuum can be noted. Relation with the outside World were determined by internal necessity, by the need for politics stability, economic development, military defense. Where Nuri relied on Western alliances to strengthen and maintain Iraq's independence, the Baathists have depended on Soviet assistance for the same purpose [1].

4.1 *The Baathist Government Relations with the East*

Since 1959, the Soviet Union has supplied Iraq with military and training, loans and technological assistance. By 1963, Iraq was entirely contingent upon the Soviet for military equipment. Relations had cooled by 1968, however, and the USSR greeted the Baathist coup of that year with mixed emotions, remembering the 1963 repression of the CPI.

Rapprochement with the East began in 1969. Aid agreements were signed with the Soviet, East Germany was recognized and a series of high-level visits were started, the most notable being Saddam Hussein's trip to Moscow in 1970 and 1972 and Kosygin's to Baghdad in 1972 (the first visit to Iraq by a high-ranking Soviet officials). The Kosygin visit marked a major step in Soviet-Iraqi relations the 15 year treaty of friendship and cooperation. The treaty provided for political, economic, cultural and military cooperation with regular consultation to be held on international issue affecting mutual interests. A 1974 trip to Moscow by Saddam resulted in an agreement on cooperation in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purpose. Other agreements for weapons, development credits, land reclamation projects railway construction and industrial development have been signed with Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

Aid, trade and oil had created dependence by the mid-1970s. Soviet assistance in the development if the North Ruaylah oil-field and construction of the pipeline to Fao were to be repaid in Iraqi crude. Iraq had become the principal foreign suppliers of crude oil to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Given Iraq's isolation from its Arab neighbours and doctrinaire treatment of Western imperialism, this was the only course open if defense and development needs were to be met. Iraq further invested in communist countries. A recent study estimated that

60 percent of Iraq's foreign exchange holding of \$3,900 million were deposited in Soviet, Hungarian, East German, Polish and Chinese banks with 40 percent located in the West (including 5 percent in New York) [1].

Iraq hence has benefited greatly from its relations with the Soviet Union. However, it should not be written off as a 'client' state. The Soviet Union has modernized Iraq's military, providing up to date arms and training and there were Soviet advisors present in the country. In addition, the Soviet built the Port of Umm-Qasir at the head of the Gulf and expanded Al-Habbaiyah air-field. Yet they have not been permitted military use of either facility. And it was not likely that Iraq might allow extensive use of port and airfield facilities by the Soviet other than for aid and arms delivery. Arming Iraq may serve Soviet political purpose, but Iraq supported Soviet foreign policy objectives only where they suit Iraq's politics and purpose. For instance, for the Soviet Iraq becomes a link in an Asian 'Zone of Peace', part of an encirclement of China and an entry to the Persian Gulf. Obviously, this coincides with certain Iraqi strategic objectives, including balancing a pro-United States Iran; the Baathist government talks of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean as a 'Zone of Peace' to be free of great power domination, for instance, no new American bases. However, Iraq further advocates equal access to the Gulf by all powers, Iranian and Iraqi; Soviet and United States. If this implies putting the US on an equal footing with the USSR, the Soviets may not be happy with Iraqi policy on Gulf security.

There were other areas of disagreement between the Soviet Union and the Baathist Iraq. The Baathist had not appreciated Soviet's professed sympathy for Barzani and Kurdish autonomy and had rejected to increase the role of the CPI in a broadened National Front. Iraq has not approved UN Security Council resolution 242 and 338 on the Arab-Israeli wars nor did the government support the reconvening of the Geneva Conference, Measure the Soviet Union has urged on the confrontation states. The Soviets, in turn, were not enthusiastic about the Algiers Accord and have failed in endeavours to mediate the disputes between Iraq and Syria, both recipients of Soviet support. A greater dissatisfaction in Soviet-Iraqi relations, however, was the issue of financing future development and repayment for aid. The barter arrangements of the early 1970 no longer work to Iraq's advantage. The price the Soviet Union 'pays' for Iraqi crude oil was set by agreements pre-dating the 1973-1974 oil crisis; at the same time the Soviets had been reselling Iraqi crude to Eastern and Western Europe for hard currency and at much higher prices. Clearly, Iraq would prefer a different arrangement, the direct sale of its oil to Europe and for hard currency as well [1].

Oil revenues had relieved Iraq of the need to depend economically upon the Soviet Union as the only available source of military or financial assistance. In 1974-1975 Iraq spent as much as for French and British military hardware as it spent on Soviet arms. While this hardly constitutes a trend, the Baathist might like to be more independent of the Soviet. Relations, both economic and diplomatic, with Western Europe and the US could serve as the means the Baathist would use to encourage and strengthen this independence. However, the Baathist government was not about to upset with the Soviet. In a visit to France in September 1975, Saddam Hussein noted that, 'the replacement of Soviet arms is not an objective of Iraqi policy, which is founded on the protection of national and Arab interests. Our international relations are determined by this principle.' Relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq would keep on to reflect both cooperation and contradiction. The Soviets in future would have less leverage on Baathist political behavior or foreign relations. They would not come to any clearer understanding of the Syrian-Iraqi estrangement nor will they be able to orchestrate a solution there. It is

the independence which Iraq insists on maintaining that would alternately warm and cool the relationship with the USSR [1].

4.2 *The Baathist Government Relations with the West*

Saddam Hussein in an April 1974 stated that: "... We do not have any sensitivity or complex against dealing with any company in the World providing that this is on a basis that would preserve our sovereignty and guarantee legitimate neutral benefit by domestic, national and international criteria"

Secure in its political control, confident of internal unity with the defeat of the Kurds, anxious for rapid economic development, Iraq has turned a tentative eye to the West. Interests in encouraging Western sources of trade, investment capital and technological expertise dates back to mid-1973 and coincides with the rapid rise in government revenues as well as with the Baathist desire to end its international isolation and dependence on a single source of assistance. It has led to contacts and contracts with Western European and Japanese companies for projects ranging from natural gas liquefaction, chemical fertilizer and cement plants to agreements on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The outcomes can be evaluated both in terms of contracts awarded and the increased flow of the trade and investment credits [1].

In recognition of France's 'neutrality' in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and her accurate stance on the Palestinian issue, Saddam signed an agreement in September 1975 with the France government pledging unclear cooperation, oil and trade concessions. France pledged to construct and equip a nuclear reactor and power plant and to train Iraqi technicians in its use and maintenance. Iraq in turn agreed to provide 15 percent of France's Petroleum need at preferential rates and award 80 percent of its development projects to French companies. The terms of the agreement were a bit unrealistic and France has yet to fulfilment its part. Moreover, considering France's past difficulties in completing its contracts and the reluctance of French companies to fulfill Iraqi requests, it was unlikely Iraq would award France 80 percent of its development contracts. In a similar exchange for oil, Japan modified its Arab-Israeli policy and extended credits to finance several major projects in Iraq. An agreement with Italy on atomic energy was concluded in January 1976 and contracts were awarded presently to Swiss and West German companies for Subway construction.

Of the Arab countries which broke relations with the US in 1967, only Iraq has not resumed diplomatic relations. When questioned recently on the possibility of resuming relations with the United States, Saddam responded, 'this will happen when suitable conditions are created.' When asked if he supposed that such conditions were to be created in the near or distant future, the Deputy replied, 'such a question is not asked in politics.' But the issue of reestablishing formal diplomatic recognition with the US is very much a question of politics. On the ideological level, an anti-American attitude was popular domestically, especially given Iraq's conception of America's capability to influence events in the Middle East through its relations with Israel. This logic extends not just to Israel. The Baathist government further sees United States collusion in Syria's

intervention in the Lebanese civil war [1].

Yet the rhetoric of Arab liberation has not kept the Iraqi from buying the United States goods. The value of American exports to Iraq has increased from a 1965 level of \$ 20 million to a 1975 level of \$ 309, 7 million. Baker and Saddam saw some advantage in bettering relations with the US. The Iraqi government was encouraging open bidding on contracts and would like American help in acquiring computer technology, military equipment and grain. Closer economic relations with the US might have also been used to counter Soviet influence, however, this was not a main element in determining either Iraqi-Soviet or Iraqi-American relations. The Baathist were not eager, at this point, to reestablish officials' relations with the US. As long as the absence of diplomatic recognition did not exclude Iraq from those ties [1].

4.3 *The Baathist Government Relations with Arab States*

On 16 March 1971, The US embassy to Lebanon sent a telegram to the department of state in which it showed "the GOI is anxious to improve relations with Syria, Lebanon, and the UAR in order to end its relative isolation from these "natural allies." While Iraq remains as adamantly opposed to a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict as ever, it nevertheless wishes to appease the UAR" [22].

In other words, since 1973; the Baathist relations with its Arab and non-Arab neighbours has shifted significantly. For the first several years of their rule, the Baathists in Iraq were more interested in subverting their neighbours than in cooperating with them. Iraq has sponsored Arab and Baluchi opposition to the Shah in Iran, tribal opposition to the Saudis and guerilla activities in Kuwait, Oman, Yemen and Jordan. Iraq's deepest enmity, however, was reserved for 'impure' Baathist of Syria. It was a measure of their new sense of stability that the Iraqi Baathists now want to participate in Arab affairs. They seek recognition and prestige through policies which stress cooperation in Arab affairs and unity in alliances with the established states of the Middle East.

Although relations with the Syrian Arab Republic would seem to belie the point, Arab unity has been a constant and recurrent theme in Iraqi politics and policy. In the early years of the regime, the Baathist concept of an Arab policy was to confront and oppose all forms imperialism, Zionism and reaction wherever perceived while pledging support to all liberation movements. While not disavowing this interests, Iraq recently shifted its Arab policy to a more positive stance. Instead of pledging the usual 'firm and comprehensive struggle' against the 'agent reactionary' Arab states. The Baathist leadership now believe [1].

That it is in the interests of the movement of unity and development and the Arab citizen in every part of the Arab World that ideological and political differences and disputes among Arab regimes should not obstruct, under any circumstances, the extension of the bridges of cooperation on a wider scale among all of these regimes and states.

From refusal to treat with the conservative Arab states, then, Iraq was looking now to form normal, legitimate relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Arab states on the Gulf. These shifts were reflected in Iraq's relations with Egypt and Jordan. In November 1974, Iraq and Egypt signed a protocol pledging economic and

technical cooperation. While Syria was severely criticized for agreeing to a UNEF extension of the Golan, Egypt was not chastised by the Iraqi government for Sinai II. Rather, Syria was accused of 'letting Egypt run interference' for Damascus. Iraq noted the 'objective circumstances' which produced for Cairo 'a direct and frank and consequently complex' approach whereas Syria was guilty of 'apostasy', of 'hostility to Arab interests' and of 'pretense' in pursuing a defeatist settlement. Egypt was offered oil, economic assistance, the settlement of Egyptian farmers on Iraqi land and a pledge of non-interference in its relations with the US [1].

What had been 'reactionary, fascist, defeatist' Jordan in 1970 become 'sisterly' Jordan in 1975, Jordan was now included in the invitation to join the northern front and given a \$ 23 million loan to finance construction of the port of Aqaba. Jordan's relations with Syria may take it suspect in Iraqi eyes but so far this has not affected Amman-Baghdad relations. What has been affected was Iraq's position towards the Palestinian Fedayeen. There were indications prior to the latest round in the Lebanon civil war. However, events in Lebanon have provided the catalyst for increasing Iraqi support and financial assistance to the pro-BPI Fedayeen as well as to the PLO and Yasir Arafat where they were in opposition to Saiqa and other pro-Syria elements. Iraq, as noted, would prefer a concerted Arab solution for Lebanon and a shift back to concentration on the 'the Zionist entity'. In event of a new Arab-Israeli war, Iraqi forces would be sent to the front but their effectiveness would depend on the extent and duration of hostilities. The longer the war, the more effective Iraqi participation would be, given the political and logistical problems involved in transporting soldiers and equipment [1].

Baathist Iraq then was evolving an Arab policy based on conciliation and unity in matters diplomatic and economic. Through this approach, Iraq wishes to end its isolation from the Arab world and to play a role in the politics of the Middle East. It was a careful and calculated policy in pursuit of prestige and legitimacy. Its success and any implementations for the future must be measured in light of one other major area of potential Arab conflict.

The Iraq government would like to apply its new reasonableness to forming relations with the Gulf Arab States and agreement on Gulf security arrangements. The policy was obtaining its main test in relations with Iran. The Shah of Iran and the Baathist leadership in Iraq viewed each other with mutual distrust and suspicions; relations have been marked by fears of military aggression, expansionism and the export of ideology. The disputes have varied from the territorial to the religious [14]. Iran for years supported the Kurdish movement in Iraq while the Baathist have encouraged resistance to the Shah. Both countries have large Shia populations and both have restricted pilgrimages to Shrines and centers of learning. Iran's occupation of several islands in the Gulf and her control of the straits of Hormuz further heightened Baathist fears fore exporting its oil or its politics through the Gulf [1].

It was in this framework that the Algiers Accord of 6 March 1975 must be place. Certain aspects of the accord have been noted already. The Shah and the Deputy agreed on the demarcation of land and maritime borders and on the restoration of security and mutual confidence by controlling the borders and ending all acts of subversion. In subsequent negotiations the land boundaries were determined according to 1914 Treaties while navigation rights and boundaries of the Shatt-Al-Arab were settled to Iran's satisfaction, the Thalweg line [16]. The border settlements, as well as Iraq's concession of all claims to Arab Khuzestan, were in Iran's favor. But Iraq gained

much in exchange; it gained a large measure of political stability as well as secure oil control the straits through which tankers carrying Iraqi crude must pass. It was an admission that Iraq cannot military challenge Iran's presence in either the Gulf or Oman [23].

"Peaceful coexistence among the Arab States situated in the Gulf" was the avowed policy of Baathist Iraq. Whether it would bring Iraq into conflict with the other Gulf state or into "sincere cooperation and solidarity" was not clear. Despite differences between the Saudis and the Iraqis, Saddam currently stated that " we are 100 percent with Saudi Arabia in every effort and in every stand it takes to preserve the Arabism of the Gulf and to protect the Gulf States". As part of its policy of Arab cooperation, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have agreed on demarcation of the neutral zone, construction of a road between Najaf and Medina (to facilitate pilgrimage traffic) and an end to anti-Saudi Arabia propaganda. Saudi-Arabia, in return, has loaned Iraq \$200 million and was sponsoring Iraq's inclusion in Arab Organizations, for instance the Arab Health Organization (AHO).

Cooperation and participation in Arab affairs were very much in style in Baghdad. In January 1976, Iraq joined with Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE in forming an Arab shipping company and signed an agreement to participate in the formation of the Gulf international Bank and an Arab monetary fund. Earlier, in November 1975, Iraq and Bahrain signed a three year trade and economic agreement calling for formation of a joint committee to implement trade agreements on agricultural and industrial products, raw materials, tourism, investment and manpower.

Iraq's new policies have not erased memories of past actions. The Baathist did not have a pacific history in the Gulf region and several areas of conflict continue to be settled before their Arab policy can be realized. Iraq has long argued for the liberation of the Persian Gulf, and has supported guerrilla movements and political organizations in Kuwait, Oman, South Yemen and Bahrain [14]. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran have been wary of Baathist motives and continue to fear the spread of communism and revolutionary ideology by Baathist-supported groups. Kuwait, the object of an 'incursion' in 1973, became in 1975 'a fraternal and dear country... there will never be any problem of any sort between us and Kuwait and will not ask Kuwait to do anything we would not ask ourselves to do''. However, the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait over possession of the Bubiyan and Warbah Islands and control of the Kuwaiti right bank of Khawr Zubayar was not likely to be settle soon [1].

The larger issue, however, was that of Gulf security. Iraq had defined Gulf security in terms of freedom of navigation, a zone of peace, and Saddam had offered 'to discuss the formation of a joint defense plan with Saudi Arabia as well as join naval fleet without jeopardizing Iran's rights in its territory. What matters most; he continued to emphasis, 'was the Arab nature of the Gulf'. Iran was promoting regional security in terms of defense pacts and control of any foreign vessels in the region. The shah of Iraq stated that, 'Iran is determined to become strong enough to defend the region all by itself, although obviously, we would prefer to cooperate with all the states in the region on an equal footing''. Given Iran's ambitious naval and program, and the suspicions it raises in both Iraq and Saudi Arabia, an agreement on any Gulf security arrangement may not be possible [14].

For several reasons stability at home, secure oil lanes, an end to isolation, a need for prestige in the Arab World, Iraq had made peace, at least temporary, with the states on the Gulf. This did not mean that Iraq approves the

status quo in the region or that the Baathist approve the 'Persianization' of the Gulf from the Shatt-Al-Arab to the Straits of Hormuz. Iraq would remain to stress and support 'every effort and every stand aimed at preserving the Arab nature of the Gulf'. Further Iraq would continue to pursue a policy of cooperation, of conciliation, of Arab unity as long as it benefits her. Relations between imperial Iran and Republican Iraq might deadlock over these issues, however, and relations between Iraq and other Arab States of the Gulf would remain tenuous at best. Until the BPI disavows support for Gulf radicals the Gulf States would not trust the Baathist government motives and intentions [1].

5. Conclusion

After the Baathist leaders had toppled their opposition for power in Baghdad. The central government of Baathist party in Baghdad talked with the Kurds to join the National Front Government in Baghdad. However the Kurds rejected to join either the negotiations or the front. Since the Kurds knew that the Baathist was not interested in sharing power with the Communist or the Kurds and cooperation between the CPI and the BPI remains limited at best. The Baathist government considered the Kurdish issue would become a main threat to its security. Hence, the Baathist government negotiated with the Iranian authority to resolve their difference over the Shatt-Al-Arab. The Iranian authority approved the Baathist government proposal and signed Algiers Accord. The Iraqi government gave the Shatt-Al-Arab sovereignty to the Iranian regime and in return, the Iranian discontinued its support to the Kurds and the Kurdish movement collapsed.

Soviet insistence on the Iraqi communist Party participation in the National Front government influenced the Baathist as well as the communists. The Baathist wished to resolve matters of domestic disunity. A political alliance with the CPI seemed necessary, given Soviet and Iraqi communist Party support for the Kurdish movement and Iraqi dependence on Soviet military aid and technological assistance. Yet the Soviets could not eliminate the distrust of Iraqi communist for the BPI and could not enhance the position of the Iraqi communist Party in the government. The CPI joined Front but its leaders proved The Baathist was not interested in sharing power with the Communist

Although Iraq and the US recently reaffirmed a 1938 treaty on commerce and navigation, prospects for the renewal of diplomatic relations between the two countries were not good for the near future. Present Iraqi policies hold few direct implications for the United States interest. Iraq did not require foreign financial assistance nor did it seek secure, long-range investments in foreign countries for its petro-dollars. The country did need aid from the more technologically and scientifically advanced nations to implement development projects and training programs. The Baathist government would like obtaining such assistance from the US and acquire as well as computer technology, military, hardware, communications, equipment, and grain in a bad harvest year. The Baathist government would not consider to make any diplomatic recognition of a substantive difference in US-Iraqi relations. Not really, lack of diplomatic recognition was not a barrier to help and trade per se. Nor would recognition necessarily bring Iraq the items of the alterations in US policies it would like. Nor recognition further permit the Iraqi government to use its ideological rhetoric against any friend of Israel.

However, Iraq will continue to probe the US to see what can be obtained without making any concessions of its own.

Despite the recent decrease in Soviet leverage in Iraq, the USSR is unable to influence either domestic politics or foreign policies toward Syria and Egypt and despite the further recent increase in volume of trade with the US, Iraq would continue to depend on the Soviet for the bulk of its arms supplies. Although the Baathist government may like to limit its dependence on the Soviet, a further decrease in USSR leverage or influence on Iraq would not produce a corresponding increase or development in Iraqi-US relations. There was no factor to assume that Iraq would use its increased contacts with the west and the US to counter Soviet influence in the country.

Iraq viewed the Gulf as a 'zone of peace', implying opposition to any militarization of the region and to the establishment of any foreign military bases. This could mean recognition of both a US and USSR presence in the Gulf for peaceful and commercial purpose. It did mean opposition to any US military presence, and means by extension to US military presence in the Indian Ocean.

If snags develop in discussion between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt, then the Baathist government may not look as favorably at the US but might certainly, once again, question its moves and intentions. If the Iraq's present policy of cooperation in Arab economic affairs and of establishing routine and legitimate relations with other Arab states succeeds, then Iraq might have looked more favorably on establishing broad ties with the US, particularly in regard to trade, development and other areas of mutual interests would be then willing to define. If the US were to help Iran in forming any unclear capabilities or in any further build-up of Iraq's Gulf fleet, this might impair Iraqi-US diplomatic relations because of the heightened fears of Iranian and US intentions in the region.

In the Baathist government's view, the US exerts great influence on Israeli actions. If the US were to change its opposition regarding Palestinian-Israeli issue, pressures Israel to withdraw from position territories and recognize the PLO (however, not the pro-Syrian PLO), then Iraq might confer diplomatic recognition as a renewed. The problem here is two-fold: First Iraq had not so much spelled out its terms for an acceptable Palestinian solution short of total war as it has spelled out what Syria must do to win the war and Iraqi cooperation. Second, Iraq stated that the US was in collusion with Syria in the Lebanon civil war in order to effect a pro-Syria and hence anti-Iraqi settlement. The question was whether this, too, was propaganda for public consumption in the ideological war with Syria or a genuine article of faith.

Before the current phase of the Lebanon war, there were indications that Iraq was toning down its support for the radical Fedayeen and for Arab-terrorists. Iraq was seeking prestige, respectability, influence, especially among the non-aligned nations. If the Lebanon-Syrian conflict could be subtracted from the equation, then a more subdued Iraqi policy regarding terrorism and the Fedayeen may be feasible and consequently may provide a further base to touch with the US. There is little likelihood of change in US-Iraqi relation, given the current regime's conception of US policies and given US support for its allies in the Middle East Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel. To sum up Iraq continued outside the periphery of US interests in the Middle East. The prevailing Iraqi

attitude towards the US-cool, gradually suspicions but not overtly hostile was perhaps the best that can be expected, again given the fundamental divergence of interest. So long as Iraq finds it advantageous to bar military use of its facilities and to seek stability in the Gulf. It contributes, albeit inadvertently, to overall US objectives in the Middle East.

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